

Creating and Using SMART Goals

Podcast Transcript

SLIDE 1

Hello everyone.

The title of today's podcast is "Creating and Using SMART Goals." During the next 10 minutes or so, I am going to give you some insight into the purpose, development and use of SMART goals.

This podcast comes with slides so you can listen to it and follow along with the slides or just listen to the audio.

SLIDE 2

Before we get started, let me read a short disclaimer:

"This presentation was produced under U.S. Department of Education Contract No. ED-ESE-14-D-0008 with Synergy Enterprises, Inc. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, methodology, technique or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred."

SLIDE 3

This is Kathleen Bethke, your Facilitator.

SMART goals changed the way I looked at designing and developing my programs and activities.

Using SMART goals inspired me to look at student needs and intentionally design programs based on those needs.

Let's discover why SMART goals are important and how to write SMART goals for your program.

SLIDE 4

A goal is the object of your program's effort or defines your desired result.

Goal setting has been defined in this way:

- The process of thinking about your ideal future (what you want to see happen for your students) and letting that vision motivate you to turn that vision into reality.

SLIDE 5

Why is goal setting important?

- Knowing the goal and striving to achieve it is motivating.

- Without goals, programs can lose focus without ever feeling that any progress has really been accomplished.
- Without goals, programs cannot effectively and convincingly tell their story.
- Plenty of people get through life without consciously setting goals. But they may be missing out on opportunities. Think about the lack of goal setting in your own life. Have you ever said, “My new year’s resolution is.....” And then a month later, no progress. It is likely because you did not set a SMART goal to guide you. It is the same principle when designing and guiding programs for students. Just like the driving question serves as a road map for students in a project-based learning activity, a SMART goal serves as your map to ensure students come out of that activity with the knowledge and skills you expected.
- I love the saying: if you don’t know where you are headed, any path will get you there.

SLIDE 6

SMART goals have been used by many corporations. But they are also used widely in education.

SMART is an acronym to help you remember what elements must be included in each goal you write.

SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound.

SLIDE 7

The first component of a SMART goal is to be specific.

This means that your goal must be clear.

Being specific refers to the who, what, why and how of the goal.

Who are you trying to impact?

What are you going to do? Use action words such as direct, organize, coordinate, lead, develop, plan, build or participate.

You might be specific by describing why or what you are doing and why it is important at this time. What do you really want to accomplish?

You might also be describing how you are going to do it.

It is not specific to say, “All students will meet standard on the English language arts (ELA) state assessment.” Stating “all” indicates that every student in afterschool needs to improve when likely that is not the case.

So instead, you could say, “80 percent of students identified as in need, and who attend regularly, will...” do whatever it is you expect them to do.

By naming the “who” clearly, you will be able to more intentionally target the students you want to serve with the activity, and show that you understand who your targeted students are.

SLIDE 8

The M stands for Measurable. Goals should be written so you know whether or not you accomplished what you wanted to accomplish.

Measurable goals should

- Allow you to measure your progress
- Keep you on track
- Spur you on
- Allow you to see the change occur

You don’t want to have a goal that says “Students will increase proficiency in ELA.”

It is better to state this: Eighty percent of students identified as in need, and who attend regularly, will show a 10 percent increase in proficiency on...” whatever you want to measure.

With a measurable statement, you can determine whether or not your activity did what you intended it to do.

SLIDE 9

The A is for achievable. Goals should be within reasonable reach. They should not be too easy to attain, but not too difficult to attain, either.

Achievable goals should challenge or stretch you slightly so you feel you can do it, but also feel you must really commit.

We just said the goal would be measurable if we said that 80 percent of students identified as in need, who attend regularly, would make an increase in proficiency.....

You must ask yourself whether it is achievable to say that 80 percent would show an increase given the needs of your students, their documented performance and the design of your activity.

“Is it likely we can impact 80 percent?” You want to stretch students and yourself, but you don’t want your goal to be unreachable. That will only leave you frustrated.

SLIDE 10

The R stands for relevant.

This may seem obvious, but it is important to cover it.

Your goal should relate to and connect to your project and the campus or schools your students attend.

You must be sure that your goal ties directly to an identified campus need and/or a student skill deficiency.

In other words, if your needs assessment doesn't indicate that there is a great need to improve ELA proficiency in the areas of sequencing and context, then you probably shouldn't be offering an activity that targets those skills.

Instead, your goal for the design of the activity and the SMART goal would be to target those skills that your identified students do need to master. Maybe it is persuasive writing or topic sentences.

You can still offer Journalism, but it needs to be aligned with the need and then the goal can be relevant to that need.

For today we are going to stay with our data that indicate students need to master sequencing and context. So, a relevant goal could say this:

"Eighty percent of students identified as in need, and who attend Journalism Club regularly, will show a 10 percent increase in proficiency on sequencing and context skills as measured by benchmark assessment."

SLIDE 11

Finally, the T is for time bound.

We must set a time frame for the goal. When are you going to measure whether the activity had the desired impact? Just like any goal in life, if we don't put an end mark, it is not likely we will stay on track.

Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target to aim at.

Our goal to this point has been this:

"Eighty percent of students identified as in need, who attend Journalism Club regularly, will make a 10 percent increase in proficiency on sequencing and context skills as measured by benchmarks."

We don't have an end point. At what point will students attending Journalism Club show improvement?

What if we said this: "Eighty percent of students identified as in need, and who attend Journalism Club regularly, will show a 10% increase in proficiency on sequencing and context skills at the end of the semester as measured by benchmarks."

Would that make it time bound? Hopefully you are nodding yes. You now know when you are going to measure whether your activity had the impact that you expected.

SLIDE 12

Let me review the acronym. SMART represents the individual components of a goal. Your goal should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound.

Within the PowerPoint slides for this podcast, you will find a slide that illustrates the SMART goal diagram. This can serve as a guide to developing your own SMART goals. I have labeled each component of the goal with the first letter of each component: S for Specific, M for Measurable, A for Achievable, R for Relevant and T for Time Bound. This will help you clearly see how each component is embedded into the full statement.

Our final SMART goal for today is:

“Eighty percent of students identified as in need, and who attend regularly, will show increased proficiency on sequencing and context skills at the end of the Journalism Club activity as measured by benchmark assessment.”

SLIDE 13

Whenever I use the word *assessment*, especially when we are talking about enrichment activities, it makes some a little anxious. So I want to end this podcast with just some words on this topic.

I can hear you now. “We don’t want to give students any more assessments, especially during enrichment activities.”

I am not proposing formal assessments such as a benchmark, but a more informal approach just to determine if the skills you intentionally embedded into the activity actually improved.

You can use relatively simple means to determine whether students have increased their understanding of the targeted skills.

For example, using Cooking Club and the targeted skills – whole numbers, fractions and measurement — you could do something as simple as use a recipe site. Let students find a recipe they like and then ask them to half the recipe. Have them write down the old and new measurements and score how well they did. At the end of the activity, ask them to repeat the process with a new recipe, and then review their work to determine if they improved.

While it is not statistically valid, it still demonstrates whether students improved.

SLIDE 14

More questions? Take them to the Y4Y Discussion Board. The Y4Y team will be glad to share resources and help you develop some goals for your program.

SLIDE 15

That is all for today. Thank you for joining me.

For now, this is Kathleen Bethke signing off. I hope you have a wonderful day.